



The worship service will be recorded and then edited so you get the best of both worlds, the service and the music videos. There's [a play list that will weave them together](#), so you can just press "play" and go from beginning to end!

Prelude: [As a Chalice Cast of Gold by Sasha Massey](#)

[A lovely soprano singing to help you get settled for worship]

Centering Ourselves for Worship, Psalm 34:15-22:

Leader: The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,

All: and rescues them from all their troubles.

Leader: The face of the LORD is against evildoers,
to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

All: When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears,

Leader: The LORD is near to the broken-hearted,

All: and saves the crushed in spirit.

Leader: Many are the afflictions of the righteous,

All: but the LORD rescues them from them all.

Leader: He keeps all their bones;

All: not one of them will be broken.

Leader: Evil brings death to the wicked,
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

**All: The LORD redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.**

Children's Message (for kids of all ages):

How do you decide who to follow?

Hymn: Psalm 34:17-18, The Lord is Near by Seeds Family Worship

[[Click here](#) for a video that will give you the lyrics and someone to sing with.

If you have a favorite hymn you'd like to include in our worship service, just send it along and I'll look for a good place for it.]

Lifting up Our Joys and Concerns:¹

The news is that God's wind is blowing.

It may be a breeze that
cools and comforts.

It may be a gust that
summons you to notice.

It may be a storm that blows you where you have
never been before.

God's wind is blowing through the joys we pray for

For all the thoughts and prayers that joined Susan Haight on the long drive down to Florida (and having the wisdom to never do that again with teenagers who don't have any data left on their phones)

For Lori & Eric's 25th Anniversary and the twins' 19th birthday, Barbara's family, having a celebratory week

For Logan Levesque's road trip from Texas to D.C. with lots of opportunities to grow along the way

For Bob & Linda Ashton's anniversary

The news is that God's wind is blowing.

God's wind is blowing through the concerns we pray are lightened. We pray

For the medical personnel who are working through another overwhelming wave of care needed for those stricken with Covid

For the people of Haiti, recovering from the earthquake

For the friends and family of Ross Jensen, whose life we celebrated this week past Friday

For the people of Afghanistan, as their country's struggles continue

For Jared and Valerie, Stacey's friends, who are both self-employed and recovering from Covid, although Valerie is home with pneumonia because the hospitals are full. They have two little kids to care for too.

The news is that God's wind is blowing.

¹ Today's Prayer of Joys & Concerns was inspired by Rev. Rick McKinley, Director of Congregational Development, quoting Walter Brueggemann, *Prayers for a Privileged People*, Abingdon Press Nashville ©2008 in the UMC Daily Prayer from June 14, 2021.

Whatever the wind is in your life,
pay attention to it ...
and the blessing of God,
Father, Son, and Spirit,
will abide with you always.

Amen.

Let us pray the Lord's Prayer together:

Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

[For next week, please feel free to send me your joys & concerns and I'll include them in our prayers: minister@bccnh.org or call/text (857) 259-7269.]

Hymn: *Great is Thy Faithfulness* by Maranatha! Music

[[Click here](#) for a video that will give you the lyrics and someone to sing with.]

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.

Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
And all I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside

Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness
Lord every morning new mercies I see
And all I have needed Thy hands hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness
Lord unto me

So faithful to me

Scripture Reading: John 6:56-69

Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.’ He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

When many of his disciples heard it, they said, ‘This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?’ But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, ‘Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.’ For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, ‘For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.’

Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, ‘Do you also wish to go away?’ Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.’

Reflection on the Scripture: What’s so difficult about this teaching?

So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” (John 6:67). Well, yeah, some days. I mean, I know I’m supposed to say, “Goodness gracious, no, never, not at all.” But Jesus calls us to live in the real world. And in the real world, there are days when you can ask me that question and the answer is, “yeah, I kinda do.” I’m tired of running in a race that never ends. I think John, too, knew that the answer was sometimes, “yes, I also wish to go away.” Because he points out that the division is not between those who follow Jesus and those who don’t. But the difficult teaching (John 6:60) is dividing one set of disciples from another.²

Jesus’ teaching is tough. We don’t get to pick spirit over body or body over spirit, but to balance both together. When Jesus says, *It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life* (John 6:63), I hear him arguing that you need the two together.³ Taking care of the worldly things allows the spirit to have a space for life to be lived. And getting

² Brian Peterson, “Gospel: Commentary on John 6:56-69”, Working Preacher “Lectionary Commentaries for August 23, 2009, Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost”, <https://www.workingpreacher.org/?print-all=31853%2C31854%2C31857%2C31856%2C31855> (accessed 1 June 2021)

³ Loye Bradley Ashton, “Proper 16, Theological Perspective, John 6:56-69” in *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary, Year B, Volume 3*, ed. David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 382.

that balance right is really tough some days. I want to care about the safety of the people who served as interpreters for us in Afghanistan. I want to care about the ICU staff who are overwhelmed in Mississippi. I want to care about the folks in Haiti whose lives were broken by the earthquake. And I want to more than care about all that and other things as well. I want to *do* something about it. But this week has been a series of challenges and hurdles and problems to be solved to get through to my surgery next week. I can't take care of the worldly things well enough to have enough bandwidth to take care of the spiritual things. And while it may feel like this week is challenging, honestly, I'm not sure if it's more challenging or if I'm just more aware of it.

Jesus asks, "Do you also wish to go away?" and Peter implies they have nowhere else to go. But that can't be true. There were business prospects, family commitments, the comforts of home, and improvements in their social status.⁴ How do we know? Because we all have basically the same list. Some of you are taking kids to soccer and some of you are taking your mom's dentures to the dentist, but it's the same thing. And the funny thing is that it's Peter that says that. Peter, who denies Jesus after his arrest. Peter who was passionate, impulsive, affectionate, but who was always willing to dare and risk more than his faith could deliver.⁵ In the start-ups I worked in before ministry, when the CEO made promises to customers or investors that the technology could not possibly deliver, we said that his mouth was writing checks we couldn't cash. Peter rarely got the balance between body and spirit correct. And never mind about getting it right, because the difficulty of balancing body and spirit is that even when you get it right, something comes along and it's all to be done again. It's a race without a finish line.

And yet, what is Jesus offering us? *But the one who eats this bread will live forever.* (John 6:58). Jesus is offering eternal life. And not this life forever, because who would sign up for sump pumps being replaced, and returning library books and checking in Market Basket for your coffee to go on sale. But eternal life. Jesus uses all these common images, bread, wine, water and asks us to see the eternal in them.⁶ I met a friend outdoors at Panera this week. The last time I saw her was before Covid. We had lunch and at the end, I nibbled on the hunk of bread that came with the meal. It was good bread. But it was a lot

⁴ Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm, "Proper 16, Homiletical Perspective, John 6:56-69" in *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary, Year B, Volume 3*, ed. David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 383.

⁵ Arthur John Gossip, "The Gospel According to St. John: Exposition," vol. 8 in *The Interpreter's Bible: The Holy Bible in the King James and Revised Standard Versions with General Articles and Introduction, Exegesis, Exposition for Each Book of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1952), 576.

⁶ Amy C. Howe, "Proper 16, Pastoral Perspective, John 6:56-69" in *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary, Year B, Volume 3*, ed. David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 382.

closer to eternal because I slowed down and tasted it. Because I was with my friend, laughing at her jokes. Because I stopped tearing around trying to get through my to-do list and just sat there in the sun.

Somewhere along the race, we decided that there were rules about the spirit. That we had to feel guilty if we weren't actively saving the world. That we were supposed to think we could save the world. That only some people could take communion on a Sunday morning. That if you weren't taking communion on a Sunday morning, you weren't someone to walk alongside in this life. We kind of fell in love with the rules around the spirit, about who's good and who's bad and who's on the inside of the circle and who's not. I can see why we like the rules, because they give us the feeling that we're in control. And when something happens that we don't like, we can just change the rules. The rules keep the fear away, the fear of the world being out of our control.⁷

What Peter did on that day when he made his choice, when he decided to follow Jesus wherever Jesus was leading him, to wherever the race was going to end up, Peter decided to give up pretending that he had control. He was not going to let fear keep him from working on balancing spirit and body. He was going to live in the real world, which is a fearful place, but he wasn't going to let fear have the upper hand in his life anymore.⁸ When he did that, when we do that, we find ourselves walking with Jesus, and walking with others. We may deny Jesus on our bad days. We may betray Jesus on our worst days. But Jesus always calls us back into the race. A race we may run without fear. A race we're not running alone.

Hymn: *Guide My Feet by Shine*

[[Click here](#) for a video that will give you the lyrics and someone to sing with.]

1, 5 Guide my feet while I run this race, yes, my Lord!
Guide my feet while I run this race, yes, my Lord!
Guide my feet while I run this race,
for I don't want to run this race in vain! (race in vain!)

2 Hold my hand... 3 Stand by me... 4 I'm your child...

Prayer of Dedication for the Gifts We've Been Given

**Living God, we give you thanks for Christ, the bread from heaven,
through whom we offer these gifts.**

**Endow these gifts with your power,
that they may express your steadfast love
and impart your sustaining strength to all those
in need. Amen.**

⁷ Howe, 384.

⁸ Howe, 382.

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

(A riff on Psalm 34:15-22 for this week.)

Leader: As we head back out into the coming week, when it may feel like we are all alone, when we may feel that we're the only ones trying to do what's right,

All: let's keep reminding each other that God's eye is on us, and God is sending in a rescue team,

Leader: We can just keep plugging away at loving our neighbor,

All: and God will come nearer, heal broken hearts, and revive crushed spirits.

Leader: In the coming week, we'll be given a chance to choose where to make our refuge, our place to go when we need a break,

All: and we should remind each other that having chosen God, we are assured of a safe place for all eternity.

Leader: Amen.

All: Amen.

[CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: # 839 "God Be With You Till We Meet Again; by his counsels guide, uphold you, with his sheep securely fold you; God be with you till we meet again."](#)

[The Music Ministry crew made this bit of video for us, so we could all sing together, with each other and our former selves!]

Postlude: [Love is the Reason](#) by Mac Powell

[Feel free to sing along and let it help you gear up to return to the world.]

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.

Psalm 34

The shaping of new life requires discipline and fidelity to principle. In Psalm 34, the moment of rescue is remembered. Furthermore the speaker counsels others on how to consolidate and sustain the new orientation. Constructed as an acrostic, the psalm is not an emotional outburst of gratitude but a quite disciplined statement for new world building.

This prayer is for those who find themselves resourceless against the power of this age, and then are remarkably released for new life.

Psalm 34 affirms that release to new life and new orientation is not just “freedom from.” It is also “freedom for.” The newly oriented we find after rescue must lead us to develop forms of behavior which sustain the gift of new possibility. If such steps are not done intentionally, very soon the recently poor and afflicted will be back in the old context of hopelessness.

On the one hand, the righteous are given well-being by God (vv. 1-7). That is, they are special objects of God’s intervention and know themselves to be recipients. That is why they are thankful. On the other hand, the righteous are responsible for shaping life (vv. 8-14). They know themselves to be summoned to take initiative in reordering social existence.

The righteous have discovered something remarkable and subversive about God. God’s peculiar inclinations are with the brokenhearted and the ones with crushed spirit. That is, God’s solidarity is not with the ones who go from success to success, but the ones denied success.

Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary*. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 133-135.



PRAYER LIST (08/22/21)

If you know those on this list, call on them & tell them we are praying for them. If you know others who should be added to this list please give their names to the minister or a deacon.

- Friends & family of June Hoff, Dave Larkin and Ross Jensen.
- Luca, Amy's nephew, who's working with a new pediatrician who's helping him and his family
- For everyone to stay as healthy as they can in the days to come
- For the friends & families of those who have died alone;
- For our church, that we remain patient with the process of re-opening
- For the medical personnel who are working through another overwhelming wave of care needed for those stricken with Covid
- For the people of Haiti, recovering from the earthquake
- For the friends and family of Ross Jensen, whose life we celebrated this past Friday
- For the people of Afghanistan, as their country's struggles continue
- For Jared and Valerie, Stacey's friends, who are both self-employed and recovering from Covid, although Valerie is home with pneumonia because the hospitals are full. They have two little kids to care for too.
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning⁹

Living God, give me strength for this day. Let your truth surround me, your righteousness defend me, your gospel guide me, your trustworthiness shield me, and your salvation protect me, that in every trial I may stand by the power of your Spirit and live by your holy Word. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Loving God, as the day ends and the night begins be near the brokenhearted, save the crushed in spirit, and redeem the life of your servants. You are our shield by day. Be our refuge by night so that we may rest in the confidence of your grace; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

In the Gospel of John, Peter declares to Jesus, “You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:68–69). Are “believing” and “knowing” the same action? How does knowing something intensify our believing something?

Daily Awareness Reflection¹⁰

At the end of the day, I’ve been asking myself the following questions. I jot down the answers and ask them again the next evening. I’ve found it helps me to remain centered as well as increasing my awareness of God in my life. It takes about 10 minutes.

1. Slow down. Stop. Prepare yourself to pray by becoming aware of the love with which God looks on you ...
2. Note the gifts God has given you today. Give thanks to God for them ...
3. Ask God that this be a time of special grace and revelation ...
4. With God, review the day. Look at the stirrings of your heart, your thoughts, and your choices as the day progressed. Which have been of God? Which have not? What does God want to say to you about both? ...
5. Ask for forgiveness for failures/omissions, for healing from their effects ...
6. Look forward to the following day, and plan concretely with God how to live it according to God’s desire for your life ...

⁹ The Morning & Evening Prayer and Question for Reflection are reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion*. Copyright 2014.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Liebert, *The Soul of Discernment* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2015), 31.

Announcements:

The church's financial obligations continue. If you are able, please mail your offering to: Brookline Community Church, PO Box 507, Brookline, NH 03033.

	Actual Income	Actual Expenses	Income vs. Expenses +/-
July	\$46,712	\$48,793	(\$2,081)

Please shop smile.amazon.com and choose Brookline Community Church as your charity to support the church. Thanks!

You can now use the Amazon Shopping app on your phone and still support the church through the Smile program.

How it works:

1. Open the Amazon app on your phone
2. Select the main menu (=) & tap on "AmazonSmile" within Programs & Features
3. Select "Church of Christ" as your charity
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to activate AmazonSmile in the app

Rev. Cath's knee surgery is scheduled for August 26:

Hopefully this time, we'll get it done. With six weeks of recovery, I should be back in the pulpit on October 17th. I'd appreciate everyone's prayers that the operation is successful!

If you need anything and aren't sure where to go, please contact Candy Tiner, the church secretary (secretary@bccnh.org, 603-801-5918) or Jill Aitken, chair of the Deacons (jgoods4@gmail.com, 973-713-7832) and they will get you to the right person.

Fire Department Chicken BBQ & Duck Race

Sat. Sept. 25, 5:00-7:00pm, \$13 for a half chicken, \$10 for a quarter chicken. Tickets for the Duck Race & the Chicken dinner [are available on-line](#).

Document Shredding at the Transfer Station on Sept. 18, 10:30am-Noon

3 sheets at a time at home? Pay by the ounce at Staples? Or let the nice folks from Millyard Bank who are sponsoring the event get rid of everything safely and quickly? I know which one I'm picking!

Reaching Out with Outreach

Outreach has been busy so far this year. We collected items to benefit Marguerite's Place, Bridges & Harbor Cares for their veterans transitional facility in Nashua.

We were able to donate in total 7,955 items consisting of diapers, wipes, paper goods, cleaning supplies, bedding & gift cards to these organizations!!

We could not have done this without the generosity of our congregation, Brookline and Hollis communities and the advertising efforts of Megan & Candy.

If you are looking for organizations to donate to over the summer please check out the websites for The Brookline Food Pantry, Share in Milford and the Nashua Soup Kitchen for their wish lists.

As non-profit organizations are starting to open up again so are opportunities for volunteer and paid positions. If you are interested or have some time please consider checking out one of the organizations Outreach supports or contact an organization that interests you.

Visiting Angels of Nashua is looking for In-home Care Aides. Please see flyer attached with more information and how to contact them.

Please feel free to contact Amy Razzaboni at arazz3914@gmail.com or speak with any member of the Outreach Board with any questions or to get more information about our Outreach Organizations and other local non-profits.

What Community Events/Fundraisers Would Share the Spirit?

With the easing of Covid restrictions, we can start to think about events and fundraisers that would share our sense of the Holy Spirit's presence in our daily lives. We have plenty of willing hands, but we need some folks to get us running in the same direction. Breakfast Buffets? Spaghetti Supper for the Ghost Train Trail Race? Christmas Faire? Something we haven't thought of yet?

If you have ideas, speak to Rev. Cath, Ann Desrochers or anyone on the Cabinet!

Making Music with the Band!

The band is beginning to rehearse again. So they'd welcome singers and instrumentalists of any level to join in making a joyful noise before the Lord. Speak to Sanjay (scherian@charter.net) if you're interested.

Brookline Food Pantry

Although we cannot be together physically at this time, Outreach is continuing to work with Rebecca Purdin through the Brookline Welfare office & CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) to address our community's needs.

The Brookline food pantry is now open on Tuesdays & Thursdays from 10-2:00 for drop-offs only. There is a list on the [Brookline Food Pantry's Facebook page](#) that is being updated as items are needed. In addition to Market Basket gift cards, this week, they're looking for:

Broth	SpaghettiOs
Cup of Noodles	Stew
Juice boxes	Parmesan cheese
Bottles of juice	Strawberry jelly
Coffee	Pudding cups

Applesauce
Crackers
Graham crackers
Cookies
Cookie mix
Oatmeal

Peanut butter crackers
Cheese crackers
Cooking oil
Toilet paper
Paper towels
Toaster pastry

If you know of anyone who could use some help from the Food Pantry, please let Rebecca or Amy know. We sense there's more need in the community than is currently picking up food.

Non-perishables can be dropped off at Brookline Town Hall (downstairs near the Town Clerk's Office), at the Brookline Post Office, or at the Cozy Tea Cart any time those places are open.

As always, perishable items such as bread, cheese, butter, eggs, meats, and milk can be donated during open pantry hours: Tues and Thurs, 10am - 2pm.

Thank you for your continued support to our church and our community.

One Free College Class for 2021 NH High School Graduates:

The Community College System of NH (CCSNH), the Foundation for New Hampshire's Community Colleges, and the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (NHCF) have partnered to provide "A Gift to the Class of 2021."

Every 2021 graduate from any New Hampshire high school or home-school program is eligible to register for one free class at any CCSNH college this fall. The gift covers tuition for a three-credit course and fees, up to \$755 per student! [Learn more.](#)

Habitat for Humanity Build in Nashua

Although they are not accepting volunteer builders at the moment, we have provided a financial donation to Habitat for Humanity in Nashua. They are currently working on a duplex for two female veterans and their kids. Habitat would welcome financial contributions at this time as well.

Covid-19 Scams Targeting Seniors

The [NH Attorney General's office put out a press release](#) describing several scams that are targeting seniors. The claims range from needing personal information to get their Social Security payments, to being family members in need of cash to treat Covid-19 symptoms, to offers of fake medical products to prevent Covid-19, to needing personal information to get their stimulus checks, to fake charities. (Honestly, what are people like!?). Please pass the word.

Covid-19 Information

If people want to know the latest status of Covid-19 in NH and the Emergency orders to date, go to <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/>

Help Lines

This time of isolation can be very difficult. You may know someone who needs some support beyond what you can provide. We're in this together.

- Suicide prevention: 1-800-273-8255
- Sexual assault: 1-800-656-4673
- Domestic violence: 1-800-799-7233